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ABSTRACT

Because it must place special needs students as well as regular students in vocational training programs, the Salem County Board for Vocational Education has initiated a non-categorical vocational training program model. Developed in response to the general practices concerning placement and a need for an individual vocational plan for students who are classified as special needs students, the model involves the following processes: (1) integrating basic data from the academically-oriented Individualized Education Program (IEP) with vocational assessment results in a plan of education intervention through non-categorical placement; (2) implementing educational intervention or services based on the individual student needs through the supportive relationships of nontraditional child study team members applied directly to staff and students; and (3) directing efforts toward desired outcomes in the areas of entrance-level occupational skills, development of related academic skills, and a pursuit of behavioral progress involving reliability and general responsibility factors related to employment. (MN)

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TRANSITION TO NON-CATEGORICAL VOCATIONAL TRAINING THAT UTILIZES COMPUTER ASSISTED EDUCATIONAL INTERVENTION AND NONTRADITIONAL CHILD STUDY TEAM FUNCTIONS

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A MODEL FOR NON-CATEGORICAL VOCATIONAL TRAINING

Overview

Operating as one of several county vocational school districts throughout the State of New Jersey, the Salem County Board for Vocational Education, as a receiving school district, provides both regular and special needs education primarily for in-county residents as well as special programs that serve a tri-county area.

As a shared-time vocational program, classified students are referred to vocational programs on a half-day placement. These students are serviced by child study teams of record within their sending districts and are provided Individualized Educational Plans (IEPs), academic in nature. Although placement is recommended on a half-time basis to vocational programs, the academic orientation of most child study teams of record does not permit specificity for vocational training within the student's overall plan.

It was further recognized that, in many respects, placement is done by the generic needs of the classification, frequently lacking in response to the specific strengths or needs of the individual. In response to the general practices concerning placement and a need for an Individual Vocational Plan (IVP) for classified students, a non-categorical vocational training model was initiated. Based on the availability of unique resources, a process was developed that involves:

A. Integrating basic data from the academic-oriented IEP with vocational assessment results in a plan of educational intervention through non-categorical placement;

B. Implementing educational intervention or services based on the individual student needs through the supportive relationships of the Non-traditional Child Study Team members applied directly to staff and students;

C. Directing efforts toward desired student outcomes in the areas of entrance level occupational skills, development of related academic skills, and a pursuit of behavioral progress involving reliability and general responsibility factors related to employment.

Synopsis of District Structure

The Salem County Board for Vocational Education operates programs under a shared-time county level concept. The District serves students from a tri-county area covering over 1200 square miles with a population of approximately 400,000 persons. Through the District's Special Needs Division, an employment orientation program and vocational training in nine occupational areas is offered. The District also offers mainstreaming services to nineteen regular occupational areas for students who may benefit from this type of training. In addition, the Board operates a state validated and nationally recognized full-time training program that primarily serves the secondary level emotionally handicapped student, as well as a state facility for severely handicapped youth.

For the last several years, the District has pioneered and implemented the Non-traditional Child Study Team concept. This unique service team functions within roles beyond those mandated under Title 18A and Administrative Code. This support primarily implements IEPs through direct services to the staff and student in four broad categories. These categories include:

A. Counseling - Preventative/Therapeutic, Crisis;

B. Testing Services - Academic, Psychological, Vocational Assessment;

C. Teacher Consultation - IEP interpretation, instructional techniques, recommendations, and behavioral consultation;

D. Parental and Community Liaison - Maintenance of home visitation, implementation of parent counseling groups, and follow-up with community based social service groups outside the District.

Reference is made to Attachment A for expanded information concerning the role and function of the Non-traditional Child Study Team.

Goals and Objectives

The goal of this alternative project is to design and implement a model of vocational training based upon individual student needs rather than classification.

Objectives necessary in achieving the goals include:

1. To provide a more valid and systematic approach to placement resulting in "non-categorical" vocational training.

   Although some efforts are under way to provide placement based on student needs rather than category, a clearly defined systematic approach does not exist. Current placement practices within the Salem County Vocational Technical Schools are described on pages 5 & 6. The proposed alternative process is described on pages 7 - 11.

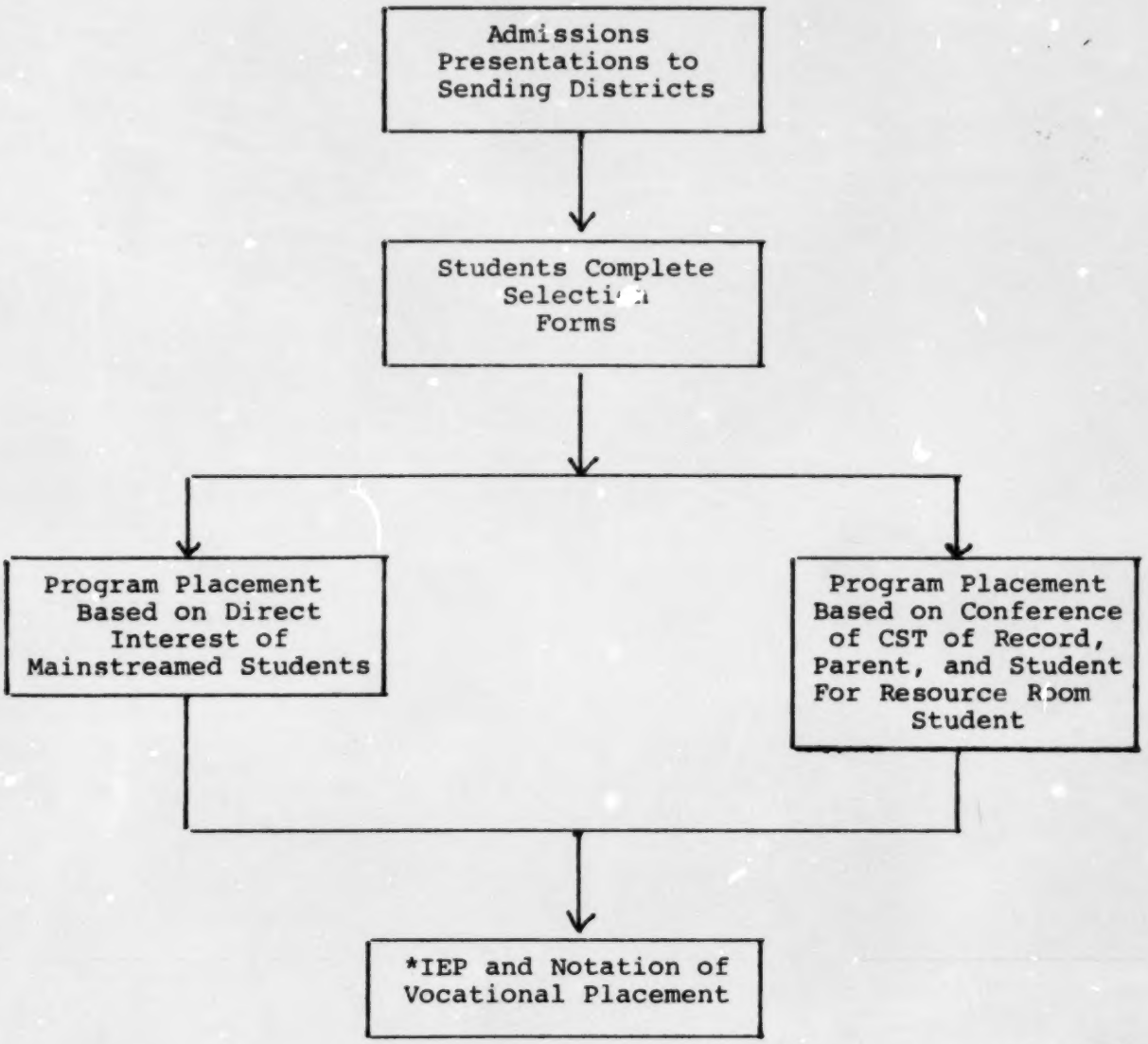
2. To develop an Individualized Vocational Plan (IVP) that reflects vocational potentials of each student.

   Currently, IEPs developed by sending districts are generally academic in nature lacking specific supportive data relating to recommended vocational training through shared-time vocational programs. The Non-traditional Child Study Team's role and function as described in Attachment A would use academic and social adjustment data extracted from the sending district's IEP and translating these into appropriate vocational training processes based upon their expertise and upon the results of the alternative plan described on pages 7 - 11. The extension of the basic IEP into an IVP (Individualized Vocational Plan) would be further coordinated with sending district child study team. This IVP would also become the documentation linkage that further supports the local district's responsibility to develop a total IEP as well as forming the basis for completion of the annual reviews involving vocational training.

Current Practice of Placement

Chart A describes the current practice relating to admissions and placement of classified students in shared-time vocational programs within the District. As shown, based on admission presentations to sending districts' student groups, students complete selection of programs as part of the admission application to the District. This selection by students currently in a mainstreamed status has primarily dictated subsequent placement within the vocational program. Program placement for students originating from resource rooms normally involve a conference with the child study team of record, the parent, and student. In both situations, the involvement of a valid mechanism to determine the placement having the highest probability of success for individual student's potential is not provided.

CURRENT PRACTICE OF PLACEMENT


Admissions Presentations to Sending Districts
Students Complete Selecti n Forms
Program Placement Based on Direct Interest of Mainstreamed Students
Program Placement Based on Conference of CST of Record, Parent, and Student For Resource Room Student
*IEP and Notation of Vocational Placement

*IEP normally lacks specificity as to nature and goals of vocational placement.

Alternative Process For Vocational Training and Placement

This alternative process not only provides a basis for a more valid recommendation toward vocational program placement, but also seeks to provide specificity in the individual vocational training goals of the student. In a sense, the process also results in the development of an IVP (Individualized Vocational Plan).

With the purpose of obtaining a comprehensive individualized profile of strengths and needs, the plan tends to replace the practice of placement normally typified by the generic needs of the classification title with a stronger basis of individual student characteristics.

Within the alternative approach, the primary steps involve:

1. The extraction of data from the student's basic IEP and other classification records that will form part of individual profile data of the student. This will minimally involve academic levels and elements of social maturity.
2. Implementing a vocational assessment which results in both interest and aptitude information concerning the student. Although several vocational assessment systems exist, this process utilizes SAGE (a System for Assessment and Group Evaluation). This assessment involves the measure of eleven aptitudes, occupational interest, and basic academic measures to support success toward vocational training.
3. Utilizing extracted data from the basic IEP and vocational assessment results, an IVP is developed to include recommended placement as well as a plan for follow-through assistance to both student and participating staff. Program placement in the IVP will include one of three broad training categories. The three categories are described as:
    a. Vocationally low-assisted programs;
    b. Vocationally moderate-assisted programs;
    c. Vocationally high-assisted programs.

The differentiating characteristics of each broad based category include:

(1) Degree of sophisticaion of career training;
(2) Percentage of academic remediation;
(3) Frequency of supportive counseling services;
Included in the plan is also specific tracking responsibility during the training period of the student involving specific members of the Child Study Team and periodic review of student progress and skill reports.

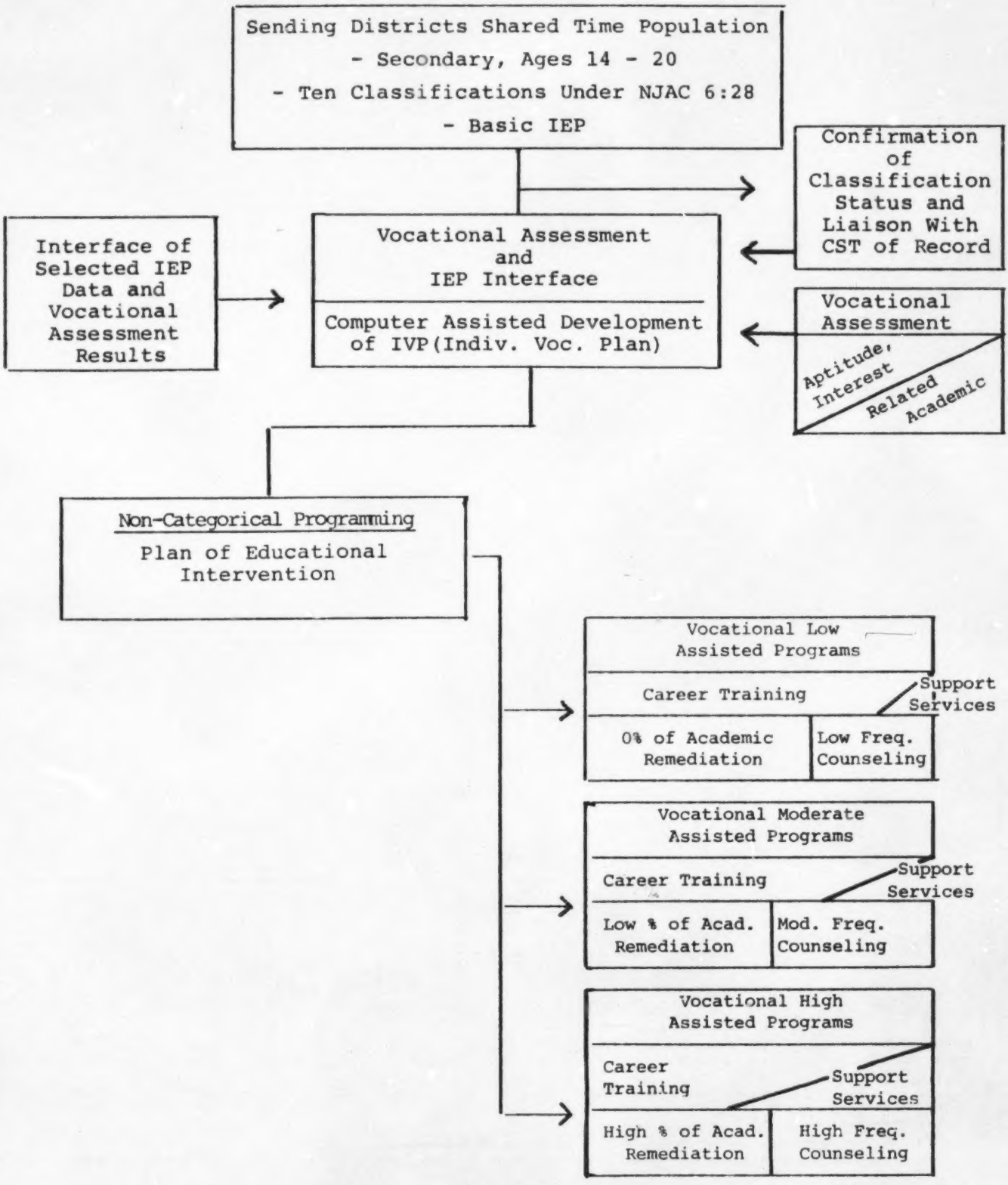
Diagram B reflects the flow of referral, assessment, and IVP development. Diagram C reflects specific training programs clustered by three broad categories under which placement and training program of the student would result. The specific training areas have been identified through several years of empirical experience in serving the handicapped population. This experience involves the operation of an employment training program since 1972, development of a nationally recognized and state-validated program for the emotionally handicapped since 1976, and the operation of nineteen regular vocational programs since 1974 that service handicapped, disadvantaged, regular, and post-secondary students; however, it should be noted that selection of these programs as matched to the broad categories are not necessarily transferable to other vocational programs since specific curricula, skill levels, facilities, and population are not necessarily equivalent.

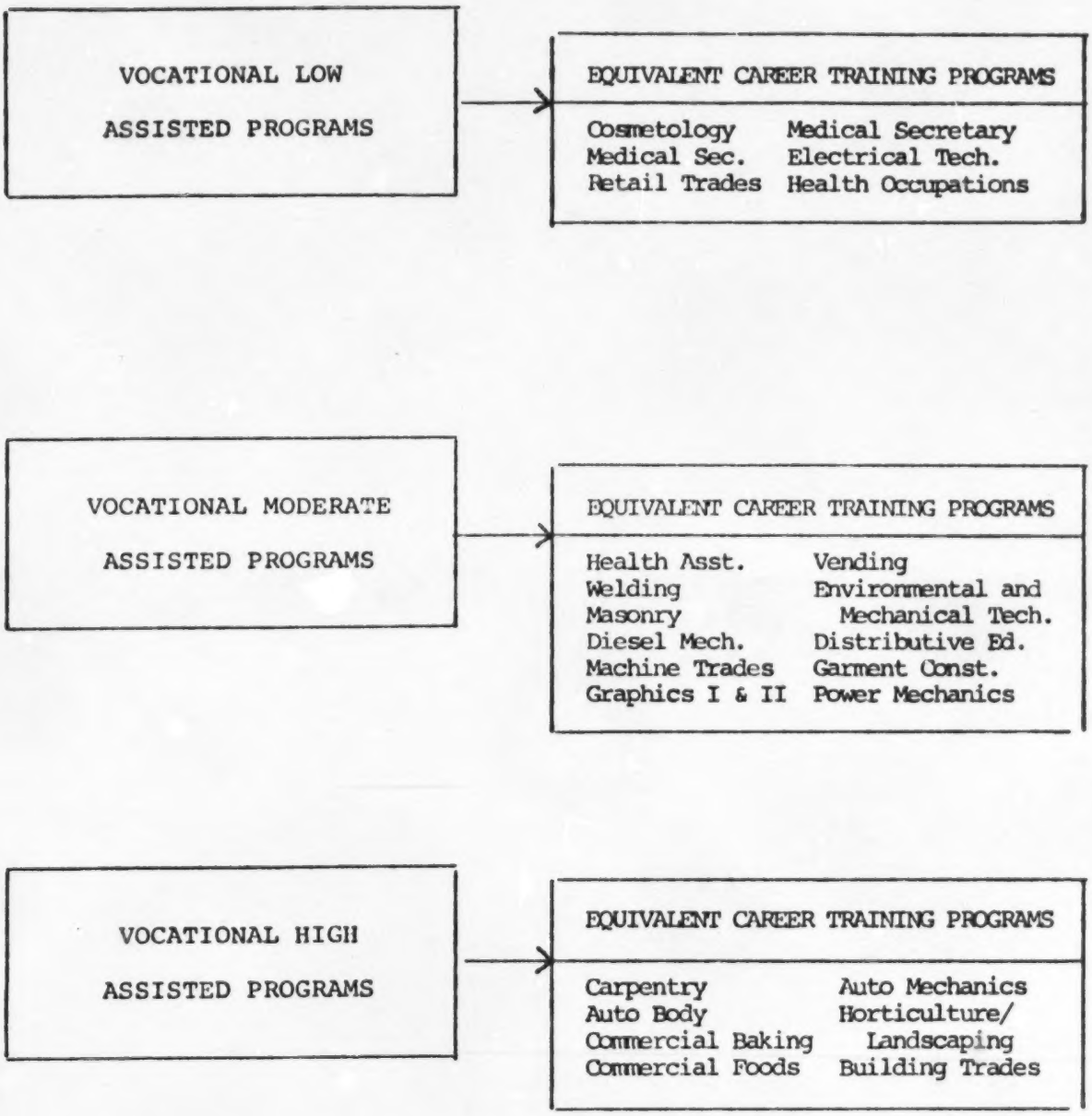
4. Addressing the clerical efficiency needed to facilitate completion of the IVP document, computerized practices will be involved.

The purpose and advantages of computerized clerical assistance involves the word processing aspects in preparing plans and documents which significantly reduce "paper" preparation time of the Child Study Team and other District professionals. As an example, current software for computerized IEPs that utilize the Commodore CBM 80-32 Computer reduces the final clerical time in pre-

paration of documents from approximately 45 minutes to ten minutes. This process also reduces Child Study Team time (not input) by eliminating handwritten preparation or dictation on tape to a selection of specific goals, activities, and objectives on a preprinted menu of items. The strength of this process still includes individualized input by a total Team effort. As an example of this process, Team members merely identify code numbers reflecting major instructional areas that identify the specific objectives and activities according to the student needs. These are checked from master listings and materials within the overall curriculum data for each program. This curriculum data is formatted into a criterion reference structure giving goals, objectives, and skill developing activities. In addition, time sequenced curriculums also exist for each employment orientation and advanced career training program. Each of these areas being codified is recalled in detail by the computer during the final preparation of the Individualized Vocational Plan for the student. The software further provides assistance toward implementing the plan by outlining a tracking schedule and involved individuals. The tracking schedule may include necessary mainstreaming follow-up relevant to the student's needs, instructor contact, parental liaison, coordination of academic remediation, and supportive counseling services.

MODEL FOR NON-CATEGORICAL VOCATIONAL TRAINING




VOCATIONAL LOW
ASSISTED PROGRAMS
EQUIVALENT CAREER TRAINING PROGRAMS
Cosmetology
Medical Sec.
Retail Trades
Medical Secretary
Electrical Tech.
Health Occupations
VOCATIONAL MODERATE
ASSISTED PROGRAMS
EQUIVALENT CAREER TRAINING PROGRAMS
Health Asst.
Welding
Masonry
Diesel Mech.
Machine Trades
Graphics I & II
Vending
Environmental and
Mechanical Tech.
Distributive Ed.
Garment Const.
Power Mechanics
VOCATIONAL HIGH
ASSISTED PROGRAMS
EQUIVALENT CAREER TRAINING PROGRAMS
Carpentry
Auto Body
Commercial Baking
Commercial Foods
Auto Mechanics
Horticulture/
Landscaping
Building Trades

Targeted Population

The targeted population includes all classified students referred to programs at the Salem County Vocational Technical Schools entering grades 10, 11, and 12 from sending districts in the tri-county area of Salem, Cumberland, and Gloucester.

Addendum - NTCST

ROLE AND FUNCTION OF THE NON-TRADITIONAL CHILD STUDY TEAM

Child study teams, functioning under the New Jersey Board of Education Rules and Regulations (Administrative Code Title 6) pursuant to Title 18A - Chapter 46, should identify, classify and prescribe special education programs for handicapped students between the ages of 5 and 21. To implement this process, a multi-discipline child study staff offers a varied range of diagnostic, consultative, and remedial services to pupils who experience difficulties in learning as noted to them, their teachers, and their parents.

In the Salem County Vocational Technical School District, a Non-Traditional Child Study Team (NTCST), consisting of a Learning Disability Teacher/Consultant, a School Psychologist, and a School Social Worker, function in a unique role compared to traditional responsibilities. This unique role encompasses responsibility for assisting students with needs in all educational programs offered in the Salem County Vocational School District toward success. This includes implementing the IEP for classified handicapped students and providing the necessary supportive services toward an effective education of all students (handicapped, disadvantaged, regular). In order to carry out this role, broad service categories are identified and supplemented through the guidelines of a flexible schedule for programs offered at the Vo-Tech Career Center, the H. D. Young Center, Project A.D.V.A.N.C.E., and the Regional Day School. The unique services of the Child Study Team involve the following broad categories:

A. Counseling - Preventative/Therapeutic, Crisis;

B. Testing Services - Academic, psychological, vocational assessment, and any other testing necessary to provide supportive input;

C. Teacher Consultation - IEP interpretation, instructional techniques, recommendations and behavioral consultation;

D. Parental and Community Liaison - Maintain home visitations as needed, implement parent counseling groups, and provide follow-up for chronic student absenteeism.

Within the above categories, the Child Study Team, therefore, acts as staff consultants, agents for counseling therapy, testing, and for liaison between school, home and community.

Under the services provided by the NTCST, occasions may arise whereby the learning difficulties of referred, non-classified students may justify the implementation of the formal classification and/or evaluation process. In this situation, the Child Study Team prepares an informal assessment of the subject student's disability in order that the formal referral process, under New Jersey Administrative Code 6:28, can be implemented with the child study team of record. This process is closely coordinated with the County Child Study Supervisor who in turn initiates contact with the responsible district child study team.

The NTCST also reviews records of referred students to the Project A.D.V.A.N.C.E. and the Regional Day School. They, in turn, submit recommendations and findings to the County Child Study Team Supervisor and to appropriate school staff. Records of referred students to other programs throughout the District are completed upon specific referral.